

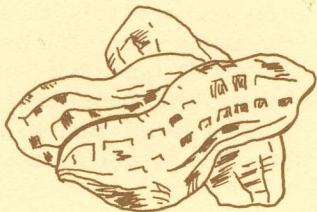
Peanuts

Sitting by the roadside on a summer day,
Chatting with my messmates, passing time away,
Lying in the shadow underneath the trees,
Goodness, how delicious, eating goober peas.

(Chorus)

Peas! Peas! Peas! Eating goober peas.
Goodness, how delicious, eating goober peas.

Although peanuts currently rank as the top cash crop in Georgia, it has only been in this century that the commodity gained economic importance in the state. Prior to the 1900's, peanut production was limited to an occasional patch on plantations where they were utilized as livestock feed.



In 1846 for example, the editor of the Albany Patriot recommended feeding unharvested peanuts to hogs as a substitute for corn. By using peanuts for food, he believed that the state's pork could be produced cheaper than Tennessee pork which was selling at three and a half cents a pound. By the late 1800's, hog producers had devoted about 100,000 acres of peanuts for grazing purposes.

Peanuts became an important human staple during the Civil War when troops of the Southern Confederacy gave out of food. Some claim that Union soldiers also took a lik-

ing to the Southern "ground pea" during the War.

By World War I, peanuts were considered an important commercial crop in some sections of the nation as a result of the development of improved machinery for growing and handling, increased knowledge of their food value to humans and livestock and the discovery of new uses for them, particularly in the food industry.

It was the arrival of the boll weevil in southwest Georgia that encouraged farmers to plant peanuts for commercial purposes in about 1915. This insect invasion, along with high prices offered for vegetable oils during World War I actually caused peanut production to increase ten fold from 1916 to 1919. The sharp increase in production prompted the first commercial peanut shelling facilities built in 1916 in Edison and Cordele. That year, 56,000 acres of peanuts were harvested. The following year, acreage increased to 195,000 acres.

During the following two decades, peanut acreage and production continued to steadily grow. More than 300,000 acres were planted in the late 1920's and over 500,000 acres in the late '30's. Georgia led the nation in peanut production in most of